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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Women  
Sixth session  
Kuwait, 4-5 December 2013

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015  
IN THE FIELD OF ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**Summary**

This document presents the activities that will be implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of advancement of women. The proposed activities have been formulated with reference to subprogramme 6, Advancement of women, of programme 18 of the United Nations strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015. The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with ESCWA Centre for Women.

**SUBPROGRAMME 6: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN****A. ORIENTATION OF SUBPROGRAMME 6 FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015**

The objective of this subprogramme for the biennium 2014-2015 is to reduce gender imbalances, encourage exchange of lessons learned among member countries and contribute to increased respect of the rights of women in line with international conventions and conferences.

**B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

<b>Expected accomplishments</b>	<b>Indicators of achievement</b>
(a) Enhanced capacity of member countries to adopt gender-sensitive policies, legislation and budgets in order to attain equal rights of women	<p>(a) (i) Increased number of strategies, policies and programmes for the advancement of women, designed by national machineries for women, are adopted and implemented at the national level</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i> 2010-2011: 16 initiatives Estimate for 2012-2013: 20 initiatives Target for 2014-2015: 26 initiatives</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of national machineries for women showing improved reporting on periodical reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i> 2010-2011: 0 reports Estimate for 2012-2013: 3 reports Target for 2014-2015: 6 reports</p>
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to combat gender-based violence through enactment of legislation and development of national action plans	<p>(b) (i) Increased number of national strategies to combat gender-based violence</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i> 2010-2011: 0 strategy Estimate for 2012-2013: 0 strategy Target for 2014-2015: 3 strategies</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of legislations enacted to protect women from gender-based violence</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i> 2010-2011: 1 legislation Estimate for 2012-2013: 2 legislations Target for 2014-2015: 5 legislations</p>
(c) Enhanced capacity of member countries to adopt and implement participatory governance and national development policies, based on the equal participation of individuals, men and women, with a particular focus on enhancing the position of women in democratic decision-making processes	<p>(c) (i) Increased number of national action plans adopting a participatory approach, with special attention to the participation of women</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i> 2010-2011: 0 national action plan Estimate for 2012-2013: 0 national action plan Target for 2014-2015: 4 national action plans</p>

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(ii)	<p>Increased number of civil society organizations dealing with the advancement of women that participate in public policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes</p> <p><i>Performance measures</i></p> <p>2010-2011: 0 civil society organization            Estimate for 2012-2013: 0 civil society organization            Target for 2014-2015: 5 civil society organizations</p>

### C. STRATEGY

19.61 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 6 lies with the ESCWA Centre for Women. The progress accomplished by member countries towards the advancement of women notwithstanding, the economic participation of women and their representation at the economic and political decision-making levels continue to be lower than in other regions. Combating violence against women remains a serious challenge in the region, especially in conflict-stricken areas. Moreover, current popular movements represent a risk, as they may result in the reversal of acquired gains in women's rights. There is therefore a need to foster greater participation of civil society, especially young people and women, in public policy formulation and active dialogue with Governments.

19.62 Building on the experience gained in past bienniums, work under the subprogramme will consist of stepping up efforts to enhance the institutional capacity of national machineries for the advancement of women and other stakeholders, such as members of parliament, the judiciary, the media and civil society organizations, through regular dissemination of new knowledge on gender issues, the provision of advocacy tools and research methodologies and the development of in-house training, knowledge and skills. The subprogramme will also provide forums in which national machineries in the Arab region can actively share with national machineries in other regions knowledge and experiences of gender mainstreaming and implementation of international instruments pertaining to women.

19.63 Work under the subprogramme will focus on building the capacity of member countries and other stakeholders to combat gender-based violence through the enactment of special laws to protect women from violence and end impunity for this crime. In line with this endeavour, due attention will be paid to national machineries for the advancement of women in conflict-stricken countries to address the particular needs of women living in those areas.

19.64 Work will also focus on ensuring that men and women are actively engaged in policy dialogue with Governments. In this context, emphasis will be laid on building the capacity of civil society organizations in public policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes through the organization of capacity-building workshops and dissemination of normative and analytical work. The subprogramme will act as a regional forum for joint governmental and non-governmental discussions on gender issues.

19.65 The subprogramme has been active in fostering relationships between Government bodies dealing with the empowerment and advancement of women and civil society organizations by holding meetings to analyse and discuss the situation of women at the regional level. Work will continue closely with other United Nations entities and regional organizations, including the UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme Subregional Resource Facility for Arab States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization,

the League of Arab States, the Arab Women Organization and the Center for Arab Women Training and Research, in order to consolidate and enhance the impact of development support on the advancement of women in the region.

#### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

Subprogramme 6 will achieve its expected accomplishments provided that: (a) there is a political will to enhance the role of national machineries for the advancement of women and to strengthen dialogue with civil society; (b) member countries take measures to align existing laws, regulations and practice with their commitments to international conventions and outcomes of international conferences on gender equality and advancement of women ; (c) the political situation in the region does not further deteriorate; and (d) current political changes in the region do not reverse acquired gains in the advancement of women leading to a deepened inequality gap.

#### E. OUTPUTS

During the biennium 2014-2015, the following outputs are expected to be delivered under subprogramme 6:

(a) *Servicing intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget)*

(i) *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (twenty-eighth session)*

Parliamentary documentation: Report of the Committee on Women on its sixth session (2014, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Committee on Women*

- a. Servicing the meetings of the seventh session of the Committee on Women (6 meetings) (2015, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Parliamentary documentation:
  - i. Report on progress achieved in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the Arab region: Beijing+20 (2015, expected accomplishments (a) and (b));
  - ii. Report on thematic key development issues concerning the advancement of women in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishments (a) and (b)).

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups*

Four expert group meetings on:

- a. Early marriage in the Arab region (2014, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. National laws and international conventions in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishment (a));
- c. Progress achieved in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the Arab region: Beijing+20 (2015, expected accomplishment (b));
- d. Social and economic situation of women in conflict-stricken areas in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishment (b)).

(b) *Other substantive activities*

(i) *Recurrent publications*

- a. Status of Arab Women Report: National Laws and International Conventions (2015, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Gender and Development Series: Early Marriage in the Arab Region (2014, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Non-recurrent publications*

- a. Women and the Knowledge Society in the Arab Region (2015, expected accomplishment (c));
- b. Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Arab Region: Status and Institutional Frameworks (2014, expected accomplishment (b));
- c. The Social and Economic Situation of Women in Conflict-Stricken Areas in the Arab Region (2015, expected accomplishment (b)).

(iii) *Technical material*

- a. The Economic and Social Situation of Palestinian Women (2015, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. ESCWA Centre for Women Gender Newsletter (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishments (a), (b) and (c)).

(iv) *Other printed material*

- a. Information kit for the seventh session of the Committee on Women (2015, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Poster for the seventh session of the Committee on Women (2015, expected accomplishment (a)).

(v) *Events*

- a. Launching the Status of Arab Women Report: National Laws and International Conventions (2015, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. International Women's Day (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishments (a), (b) and (c)).

(c) *Technical cooperation (extrabudgetary)*

(i) *Advisory services*

Gender mainstreaming and follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and international conventions and resolutions on gender equality and the empowerment of women (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Training courses, seminars and workshops*

- a. Training workshop on the use of media to empower women in the Arab region (2014, expected accomplishment (c));
- b. Training workshop on women and the knowledge society in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishment (c)).

(iii) *Field projects*

- a. Institutional capacity-building for Arab parliaments and other stakeholders to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (Development Account) (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Establishment of an observatory of women in the Arab region – pilot country Lebanon – in partnership with the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (a)).

Annex

**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

**Subprogramme 6: Advancement of women**

*General Assembly resolutions*

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|--------|--|
| 64/137 | Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women  |
| 64/217 | Women in development   |
| 66/131 | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women   |
| 66/132 | Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly |

*Economic and Social Council resolutions*

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|---------|--|
| 2011/5  | The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women |
| 2011/18 | Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women   |

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions*

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|------------|--|
| 278 (XXIV) | Increasing the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and peacebuilding  |
| 293 (XXVI) | Upgrading the ESCWA Centre for Women to the level of a division and follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab countries after fifteen years: Beijing+15 |

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